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A Roundel

with Ballades





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A Roundel with Ballades

by

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*And now folowinge this litel quayer conteyneth a Roundel
with sondry Ballades, whiche somme men seyen weren
writen by oon that was late a prisonnier in stronge bondes
in the Ile of Man. Redeth and noteth, I preye yow, my
maystres that ben wise.*

I

Roundel

To preysen Love, what musyk may availle?
Have I to sechen in a lapidarie
Or astrolabie, or through the bestiarie
MASing his might with termes of mervaille?

Briddes and floures a lover wel may warie,
Eching his staves with swich apparaille,
To preysen Love, what musyk may availle?

And swote smelles fro Ynde and fro Ytaille
Usen thes lovers to fynde necessarie,
To preysen Love, what musyk may availle?

CHesing comparisouns is gret travaille,
And I must folwe custome and nat varie;
My swete is lyk—a vers that wol nat tarie,
Purtreying hir, my roundel sholde faille.
To preysen Love, what musyk may availle?

II

The Beggere atte Parlement

Al one he stod at Loves Parlement,
To-toren and bismotred his array.
The folkes lowe: "A begger! Taketh tent!
What sholde he heer, so wrecchid and ungay?
Out, Beggere! Now singeth welaway
If Love be comen to swich sory nede
That she with cherles holde her haliday,
A beggere to Loves favour bede!"

Stedfast he stod at Loves Parlement—
Till that a mayde theramong, that say
Trouthe in his yen dwelling, on the bent
Stal bi him softely, and hent away
His hat, that over his crispe lokkes lay,
And with a breeth: "Good Folkes, nimeth hede,
Heer chese I now, wher noon shal sey me nay,
A beggere to Loves favour bede."

Chaunged he stod at Loves Parlement ;
His ragges fellen as ikel fro the spray !
It semed thanne a miracle was ment,
For swich a knight was never er that day
In londe yseen ; his armure of noblay
Glemed with golde, as doth a leming glede—
A proper man to wedde a mery may,
A beggere to Loves favour bede !

LENVOY

Swete, be kynde, maketh no delay,
My hat is on, and I in woful wede
Abide til ye graunten al my pay,
A beggere to Loves favour bede.

III

The Goshawk

By Temse bank, ther medes blosme grene,
 Beautee the hawk, with eyen Percyng cleer,
Fley wyde upon Octobris blastis kene,
 To cacche an Herte, cowering by ryveer
 For showting of Disport the falconer;
And broughte hit sone out of the wattris colde
To doon therwith right as my lady wolde.

The Herte spak: "Good Goshawk, I am lene,
 Maigre, and unfit to ben your prisonnier;
I love unloved, by me it shal be sene
 How Love requiteth his servauntes here,
 Than lat me goon, and caccheth my compeer.—"
"Passe over this," quod Goshawk, "I am holde
To doon with you right as my lady wolde."

Almoost the Herte brak for sorwe and tene,
But al for nought, he muste in this mester
Abyden still, ther nas non other mene,
Till that my lady, riding sumwhat neer,
Was war of hem, and took the hawk to were
Upon hir hand,—but never nas I tolde
What Herte suffrid, as my lady wolde.

LENVOY

Swete, this Herte am I, and this preier
I send yow, albe ye thenke I bolde,
Yit if Pitee wer chaunged for Daungier
Ye mihte doon therafter as ye wolde.

IV

The Etaynes

Withinne a ferly roghe shawe
A denne darkith undre lee,
That many a good knight hath yslawe
And mo halt in captivite.
Therinne lurken brethren thre,
Hate, Gred, and ugsom Pryde,
Thes alderworste etaynes be
Remayning in the cuntre side.

Gred fedeth fulle his hungry mawe
With folke of London the Cite,
Merchauntes, doctours, men of lawe,
That bolne with prosperite;
And Hate fareth over se
In werres roming ferre and wyde,
For fewe ronke ar heer to slee
Remayning in the cuntre side.

Pryde putte al this worlde in awe,
Ther goth noon heigher of pouste,
For riche and poore to hym drawe
To gyve hym al her good in fe
Til they be wastede, arm and kne;
His pathe impossible is to hyde,
Hir bones bleche on every tre
Remayning in the cuntre side.

LENVOY

God graunte, Swete, er longe, we
That taken Love to ben our gyde,
Namore swiche etaynes se
Remayning in our cuntry side.

V

The A B C of Louers

Abide aloon, awayting hir message ;
Beaute of othres se thou wel forveye ;
Curteys thou be to alle, prince or page ;
Dreme ay she sleped in thine armes tweye ;
Endure peyne, though for Love thou deye,
Faste for Love, til thou be pale of face ;
Giftes dispend, ne spare no moneye,
Humblesse folwe, as thou wol fynde grace.

Joly and fete, jocounde of thy visage,
Kynde to wymmen alle, of thy nobleye,
Loyal to þo that weren hir image,
Mannerly meek, that never thou foleye,
Ne nick with nay hir hestes to obeye ;
Old customs kepe, as youthes heet shal pace ;
Paciently dare, Fortune wol purveye,
Qwyckenyng othres, that thou may fynde grace.

Rechelees serve, though Daungier shal rage;
Secre of tunge, Love thou nat biwreye;
Trewe of thy woord to payen love-tarage,
Upyeld thyn herte and al to Loves weye;
Vertu seche oute, be wis and wel-biseye,
Worship Kyng Love, whil thou has lyves space;
Yelp never, as thou wol speede in thy journeye,
þeþe hir of mercy, and thou shal fynde grace.

*Nota: { He that in love wol wel be thewed,
 { Lerne this staves, els be lewyd.*

VI

The Listes

Biheste blynneth whan the mone is newe;
By yow, my Swete, ensauple may I take,
Whos colour, yif hit souneth to the blewe,
Is sone ysprad with skyes frounyng blake.
But Trouthe, Loves chaumpioun, shal make
This false knight the gree to yelde and weyve,
For though Biheste stant al white in lake,
Yit Trouthe is allerfirste in armes preve.

Biheste, fy, why wol ye nat be trewe,
The bront abydyng for your wordes sake?
Your name is loren, your good is putte in mewe,
In your despyte a miscreaunt may crake
And seyn, "A ha, his mete is brente and bake,
Pulle of his belles, yvel mote he cheve."
But, Swete, though Biheste thus they nake,
Yit Trouthe is allerfirste in armes preve.

Now Trouthes baner, brouded and costlewe,
Is splayed forthe, with penon wel out-shake;
Ther ride I under, fressh and glad of hewe,
Syr Trouthe exilith al my biter ake,
Wherfor to preyse hym I nill never slake,
Nor nevereft to fals Biheste cleve,
That maked me the wintris night to wake,
For Trouthe is allerfirste in armes preve.

LENVOY

Swete, Biheste is bounden atte stake,
Lat se yif we shul here his fals bileve:
“Confiteor, mea culpa,” thus he spake,
And Trouthe was allerfirste in armes preve.

VII

The Minstrel

A joly mynstral, on a halyday,
Song us a tale of love and of honour ;
How the ferse Amiral with anger say
Brest unto brest, Florice and Blancheflour
Abedde in othirs armes, in the tour ;
And whil the sleep was yit faste in hir eye,
Ech was biraft of othir paramour,
And caste in cruel dongeoun for to dye.

So swete he song, so gentil was the lay
That fro my lady yen fil a shour
Of teres. Then quod I, "Maistresse, nay,
Thei suffriden nat longe in this langour ;
The Emir yaf pardoun to the trespassour,
And thei were wedde. Swete, of curteisye
Hath lik pitee upon your servitour,
And kepe him nat in dongeoun for to dye."

She smyled than, and I, in som affray,
Maad bold to kisse hir hand. "In happy hour!"
The mynstral lough, and softe stal his way
Syngyng of Love, the myghty Conquerour,
That, undre covert of pypes and tabour,
Enchaunteth lovers by his mynstralcy:—
This was the firste ginnyng of favour
To me, that thoughte in dongeoun for to dye.

LENVOY

Swete, if a Song winneth to Loves bour,
Than wol Service have resoun for envie.
Lat nat your grace chaungen hir colour,
Lest I be lefte in dongeoun for to dye.
Explicit.





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